

# BEE GEES HAPPENED EVERYWHERE — BUT HERE!

THEY arrived in Britain from Australia just six months ago and although they didn't exactly set the pop world alight here, they became one of the top groups on the international scene.

Almost every other country — including America — wanted to know about them. Top name artists clamoured to record their compositions; their record sales abroad ran into millions — yet the public in this country treated them almost with indifference.

But now people are beginning to sit up and take notice thanks to a little ditty called "Massachusetts" which has shot to number 13 in this week's NME Chart, giving the Bee Gees their first really big British hit.

Despite the fact that the Bee Gees never worry about hit records here, they have always striven to make No. 1.

"That was our first intention on leaving Australia," said Barry Gibb, when we met recently in their manager Robert Stigwood's plush house near Grosvenor Square. "We wanted to make it here, and then start concentrating on America and the Continent — but somewhere along the line everything started working out the other way."

Sitting on either side of Barry, on an enormous mustard-coloured settee, were his younger twin brothers Maurice and Robin. Their manager, Robert Stigwood, who describes himself as a "fun-loving, show-business magnate," sat near the telephone and every so often would start reciting the sales figures of "Massachusetts."

I asked Maurice how they had come to write a song about "Massachusetts" which they have never visited.

"We worked out the basic melody in about five minutes



BEE GEES (l to r) BARRY, ROBIN and MAURICE GIBB, VINCE MELOUNEY (behind Maurice), and COLIN PETERSEN. This corrects the mistake in our Life-lines feature two weeks ago. (Napier Russell picture).

when we were in New York. Robin and I began, then Barry started throwing in ideas. I'm not quite sure why we thought of Massachusetts in the first place because we weren't even sure how to spell it."

Most of the Bee Gees song-writing takes place in the recording studio just before a session. "We may all have ideas beforehand," said Barry, "but we're never sure what the end product is going to be like until we're in the studio."

Although their "New York Mining Disaster" was a medium-sized hit, their follow-up "To Love Somebody" failed to make it despite numerous plays and

TV plugs. In fact, everyone raved about it—but no one bought it.

"Everyone told us what a great record they thought it was," said Robin. "Other groups all raved about it but for some reason people in Britain just did not seem to like it."

"I think the reason it didn't do well here," added Barry, "was because it's a soul number. Americans loved it but it just wasn't right for this country. Yet

most people who have heard Massachusetts tell us they prefer 'To Love Somebody.'"

"'To Love Somebody' was a good record but 'Massachusetts' is a commercial record."

So far the Bee Gees have played very few dates in Britain. Why was this I asked them.

"Firstly because we just haven't had the time," said Barry. "We've been filming TV shows and travelling

abroad so much it's just been impossible to do much here.

"The dates we have played have all been great. We found that all types of people were coming to see us. From teenyboppers right up to adults—and this is exactly what we want."

"We want everyone to come and see us—not just one particular age-group."

This is one of the reasons why they have avoided the flower scene. Instead they wear what they describe as "fantasy clothes," multi-coloured suits, shoes with curled up toes, etc. "We'll be wearing that type of thing when we play at the

## says NORRIE DRUMMOND

Saville theatre on November 19 Maurice promised.

That date will be one of the most ambitious in the group's career. "We're having a three-piece orchestra and a hundred extras to enact scenes from mythological and historical events."

Some will be dressed in Greek costumes, others in Peter Pan-type costumes.

At the moment the Brothers Gibb are working on a special composition called "World" which will be heard for the first time at the Saville.

The entire show may be filmed and used to promote "World," if it is issued as their next single.

Now that the Bee Gees are achieving the recognition they deserve in Britain, they hope to spend more time working here. "After all it is our home," they said.

## WHO'S WHERE

(Week commencing September 25)

KEN DODD

London Palladium

P.J. PROBY

Birmingham Castaways (commencing Sunday)

CHILLA BLACK

Batley Variety Club (commencing Sunday)

JOHNNY MATHIS

London Talk Of The Town (commencing Monday)

## ONE-NIGHTERS

PINK FLOYD, KEITH WEST AND TOMORROW

London Saville (October 1)

JAMES BROWN

Royal Albert Hall (3rd)

TRAFFIC, FLOWERPOW MEN

Finsbury Park Astoria (4th)

Chesterfield ABC (8th)